

Minutes for CPC Meeting of 6/9/05, 8:00 pm - 9:30 pm, Library Meeting Room

Attending:

Susan Mitchell-Hardt, Catherine Coleman, Nancy Tavernier, Ken Sghia-Hughes (8:20), Andy Magee, Peter Berry, Walter Foster (8 pm) Roland Bartl

Absent: Stacy Rogers, Bob Coan, Matt Lundberg

1. Approval of Minutes from 5/19/05

The minutes of 5/19/05 were approved as amended.

2. Discussion of Next Steps

Andy has put his name in to be re-appointed to the ConCom, and would therefore eligible to be reappointed as their representative to the CPC. The ConCom needs to tell the Selectmen they have re-appointed him.

Election of Officers will be on July 14, 2005.

Catherine indicated she is willing to be Chair, and Susan indicated she is willing to be Vice Chair.

Membership

The Selectmen are waiting for the Volunteer Coordinating Committee to bring forward the applicants for the Associate Member position for their consideration.

Nancy is in the pipeline for renewing her Associate Position on the CPC.

Nancy commented that a charter change was voted at the April election which allows Associate Members to vote in the absence of regular members if they are not present. She asked if it applies to the CPC. It is anticipated that it does not apply as the CPC is not a charter board, however, Peter Berry will ask Town Counsel.

Nominating Committee: Can the chair make nominations? Peter will explore this possibility and come up with recommendations. Committee members may volunteer to Peter, as well.

It was decided to wait to elect officers until the July 14 meeting rather than the June 23 meeting as the Bylaw states that "at the first meeting of each fiscal year, the Committee shall elect a chair person and a clerk by a majority vote." Since terms expire on 6/30 it is also courtesy to new members.
ACTION: Peter will email committee members about this proposal.

CPA Plan - FY 2006

Bob Coan has been asked to give the CPC an update on the Historic Preservation section of the CP Plan next time.

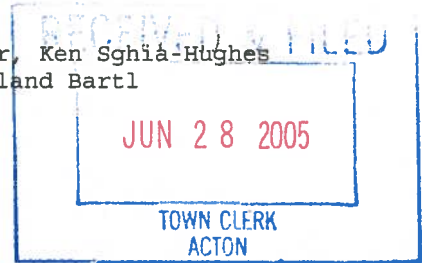
Review and Update of:

Open Space and Recreation Section

Peter indicated that the changes seem minor.

Andy solicited comments from the Land Stewardship Committee, ConCom and Acton Conservation Trust. Their comments were that it's fine.

It was commented that CPA funds won't be enough to purchase a significant tract of land such as the Robbins Mill Pond Land which was formerly offered to the town for \$7.8 million (\$1 million was to be raised privately).



It was agreed to add that bonding could make such a purchase possible.

Andy will bring changes back to the next meeting on 6/23.

Recreation Section

Matt added one small change to the Recreation section to the third paragraph in Section B. "Rec zones"... would maximize the benefit of CPA funding by creating open space buffers..."

Re: Step 4. Project Execution section of CP Plan

ACTION: Roland will ask the Town Treasurer to come up with language about the public bid process to be included in this section.

Andy's comments on the Plan in general:

p. i, Introduction; there was some discussion about the appropriations listed in the table.

It was commented in Appendix 2A and 2B that the Committee Recommendation for the East Acton Village project was \$0, that the Habitat for Humanity project was withdrawn, and that C. Richard's project recommendation was \$0. It was agreed to substitute 0's for dashes in the aforementioned Committee Recommendations and to leave blanks for the CPA Categories.

It was agreed to send each project recipient the same letter as last year (change the date).

ACTION: Roland will bring the letters on letterhead to the next meeting for Peter's signature.

ACTION: Peter Berry will talk to the members of the Historical Commission and ask them to update the CP Plan.

Peter commented that the Committee will bring in the interest groups next year after next April Town Meeting in preparation for the CP Plan revision

Updates on Project Completion

T.J. O'Grady Skatepark: This project has been problematic. In the future when a group is fundraising privately for public projects, it must be stated that the private group must give the town control of the funds. The Skateboard Park project volunteers hired a designer with no engineering background. The project volunteers spent private funds on ramp design which contained two unique features; however, there are no written drawings. The project volunteers have asked the uncertified engineer to make the drawings, which could lead to his being sued. The fact that a private entity picked the designer caused a huge problem.

The ramps were less expensive than expected and the project volunteers want to spend the excess on something else, which is also problematic.

Friends of Leary Field (FOLF):

FOLF have broken ground. There is a gap in funding which affects the D's (scoreboard, long jump area) which is scheduled to be paved. The total cost will be \$815,000. The difference will be made up by private fundraising. A good contractor was picked. FOLF is looking for a white knight to contribute \$25,000. The school will pay for Infrastructure drainage for the hill so the silt won't run down on the track. The school will pay for the drainage work.

Jones Tavern:

The project is proceeding. First the applicant is to spend the private contribution. Roland advised the applicant to get receipts, to give the town the receipts, and to not pay in advance.

Update from Nancy on Community Housing projects:

The 2004 Community Housing Fund has been received by the ACHC and placed in the bank. An additional \$10,000 was taken off this year's fund for Administrative Support earning interest.

214 Central and 28 Willow Streets Feasibility Study: The preliminary and septic design for 8 bedrooms is finished; a farmhouse design was chosen for Central St. and a 3 bedroom bungalow design for Willow St.. Nancy will talk to the people at the state to tap into the balance of the grant.

There is a potential to received \$300,000 from the state. The state will subsidize the total development which costs \$1+ million. The ACHC will get control of the site and apply for a comprehensive permit. If it comes through, they will need CPA money next year. The neighbors are very pleased. It's a suburban model for infill development and use of a brownfield.

Habitat for Humanity is holding an organizational meeting at the South Acton Congregational Church in an effort to create the framework necessary to move forward with a new proposal for CPA funds for Fall '05.

Other:

Communication with the Board of Selectmen:
Walter commented about keeping the channels of communication open with the BoS not only during the run up to Town Meeting but also during year. Many people want to know what the CPA can do and how it can be used efficiently. Though Walter reports to the Selectmen, he doesn't have enough time to give them the benefit of a good discussion.

The CPA and the whole funding mechanism is important to the BoS. The town will have two or more projects/year. Walter advocated for scheduling time on the BoS agenda to talk about execution and process issues, budgeting issues, etc. It will provide an opportunity to educate the BoS and the public that CPA funds alone will not buy a large piece of land.

The CPC can also discuss with the BoS whether or not to push for raising the property tax surcharge to 3% and when would be the best time.

Recently 23 out of 25 communities passed the CPA, many at the 3% surcharge level. The attitude is why turn down state money. The BoS will meet once/month after 6/13; a fall Special Town Meeting is not anticipated.

It was asked how the town determines which projects to promote. The Town Manager has a staff meeting and asks the staff what's important. Andy expressed concern that if \$300,000 were set aside for open space and \$600,000 was required as the local match for a Bruce Freeman Rail Trail proposal, only \$200,000 would be left for the rest. If that scenario is likely to bear out, it will be important to get that message out so that the Committee doesn't get swamped with expensive proposals.

(It was commented that the BFRT application may not ask for a big amount for this year).

ACTION: It was asked that the CPC be put on the BoS agenda for a future meeting.

Bonding issue:

John Murray is still concerned about the bonding issue. It was pointed out that Westford and other communities have successfully used the bonding mechanism.

ACTION: Peter offered to follow up with Mr. Murray re: bonding. It may be necessary to appoint a subcommittee to focus on this issue.

It was asked if any major land purchases are on the horizon. It was commented that a small parcel is in the pipeline and there could be a significant land acquisition. Andy is a member of the newly formed Open Space Committee composed of himself, Peter Ashton, Jane Ceraso, Ruth Martin, Dick Hatfield, Karen O'Neill, and Charlie Carlson. The CPC, Acton Conservation Trust (ACT), Water District, Planning Board, etc., are represented. The Open Space Committee will be the liaison between open space advocates such as ACT and the Selectmen on 61A parcels and will perform a first cut review.

3. New Business:

Ken commented that Betty McManus retires from the AHA the end of the month. Her replacement will be Kelly Cronin from Sudbury.

Respectfully submitted:

Susan Mitchell-Hardt